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RUSSIAN WORKERS AND WORKSHOPS IN 1926

By Wm Z. Foster

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FOREWORD

This pamphlet is a report of a visit to mills, mines, and factories in the Soviet Union. Its aim is to present a general and authentic picture of conditions as one finds them in a trip through various Russian industrial centers of today. It is not a detailed study of industry, but a series of often quite miscellaneous facts, scenes, and impressions gathered as we went along. Although this pamphlet aims primarily to illustrate conditions in present-day Russian industry, it also deals with other working class institutions, such as the Communist Party, the trade unions, co-operatives, workers' clubs, theaters, courts, etc., just as we met them on our journey, thus giving a broader picture of the work-lives in Soviet Russia. After completing the recital of our journey proper, a chapter has been added dealing with the economic and political situation generally in Soviet Russia. Our trip covered the following cities: Ekaterinoslav, Stalino, Kharkoff, and Leningrad, in the order named. My wife Esther and I visited the first three towns together in the order named. On the trip to Leningrad we were accompanied by Alex Bittelman and his wife

American workers have been lied to on an unprecedented scale about the Russian revolution. Every phase of it has been deliberately distorted and garbled. All the rag-tag and bob-tail supporters of capitalism, from employers to reactionary trade union leaders, have shared in this campaign of misrepresentation and villification of the first revolutionary government of workers and farmers. If this pamphlet contributes even in a small degree towards sweeping aside this curtain of lies and error and towards giving American workers some idea of the tremendous progress being made by the working class in the Soviet Union, it will have fully served its purpose.

Chicago, May 1, 1926.

RUSSIAN WORKERS AND WORKSHOPS IN 1926.

The Story of a Trip Through Soviet Industry.

By WM. Z. FOSTER.

CHAPTER I

Ekaterinoslav

Ekaterinoslav, the first stop on our trip, is located on the Dneiper in the Ukraine, about 800 miles south of Moscow. It is an important industrial center. This is evidenced by the fact that although the city proper has only about 200,000 inhabitants there are no less than 81,000 trade union members in the city and its immediate vicinity. During the period of acute revolutionary struggle, from 1917 to 1921, Ekaterinoslav was a storm center. It changed governments 18 times, Denikin, Mach, Petlura, Skoropadsky, as well as the Bolsheviki, rotating in and out of control of this city. At one time there were three distinct governments in Ekaterinoslav, located in different sections of the city and all warring against each other. The place was badly shaken up during these civil wars, and it still bears many traces of the devastation.

Early on a Sunday morning in April of this year, we arrived in Ekaterinoslav after a 30 hours' ride from Moscow. We were met at the depot by a committee representing the Ekaterinoslav Central Labor Council and led by the secretary of that organization, Smirnoff. They gave us a glowing greeting. An arrival on the same train was a French metal worker named Geram. He had an interesting mission. He came from the north of France, where is located the steel company which formerly owned great steel mills in Ekaterinoslav and other Ukrainian cities. Bitter at the loss of its plants and eager to make propaganda generally against Communism, this company is now assiduously spreading a choice collection of lies amongst its thousands of workers in France, alleging that the Russian workers are making a complete failure of operating its former mills. Geram came

to Ekaterinoslav to check up on these lies and to get the real facts. He may be said now that during his stay he gathered enough information to refute the false stories of the French employer and to greatly surprise his fellow metal workers in France by the success being made by the Russian workers. He joined our party. We all climbed into an automobile and made a wild dash for the Spartacus Hotel—a wild dash is the right expression, for in no other country do automobile chauffeurs drive at such break-neck speed as they do in Soviet Russia.

A Co-operative Convention

It being Sunday, we could not visit the industries, so we took in various other institutions. The first was a local convention of representatives of the Ekaterinoslav co-operatives. About 100 delegates were present. The reports of the officers showed rapid progress, which is characteristic of the tremendous growth of the co-operative movement throughout Soviet Russia, on the land as well as in the cities. A few figures from these reports will show how the Ekaterinoslav workers are building their distributive system:

	Year ending Oct. 1, 1924	Year ending Oct. 1, 1925	Increase
Sales for year (roubles)	2,224,000	9,206,000	314%
Number of employees....	371	1043	206%
Number of stores.....	47	194	313%

In the five months since last October this splendid showing had been still bettered. Improvement was made in every direction. The total sales for the five months were 9,456,415 roubles, or more than for the whole previous year; 15 new stores were established, and the sales turnover per employee was increased from 2,016 roubles per month, the average of the previous year, to 3,027 roubles per month.

The Ekaterinoslav co-operatives, thus expanding, have outdistanced the N. E. P., or private stores. But the convention delegates were highly critical of the management and insistent upon still greater efficiency. For hours the workers, employed mostly in the steel mills, criticized every detail of the business and offered many suggestions for improvement. Some complained that the buying prices were too high, others that the selling prices were too low or too high on certain articles, that there were too

many employees, that the lines of commodities were not complete, etc., etc. The officers keenly noticed the criticisms and suggestions made and will be held to account to attend to them. The convention was a splendid illustration of how democratically and successfully the Russian workers are building the important link in their new society, the distributive system. We were inspired. In Soviet Russia even a co-operative convention can be thrilling, so dynamic are the workers in action.

A Revolutionary Trial

In the evening, after the co-operative convention, we proposed to pay a round of visits to the Workers' Clubs, which are playing an important role these days in the Soviet Union. Before first we dropped in for an hour or so to attend a trial of counter-revolutionists then in progress. As we approached the place we found a crowd of at least a thousand people striving for admission. The trial was taking place in a theater, which was evidently chosen for its spaciousness. The place was packed from pit to gallery. The court was being held on the stage, the whole being draped with red. Many a play had been shown upon the stage, but this time it was the scene of an actual drama from real life.

The defendants were four, a priest, a worker, an intellectual and a nondescript N. E. P. man. They had been recently arrested and were accused of having organized pogroms against the Jews and generally acting as murderous agents of Czardom in pre-revolutionary days. The evidence against them was overwhelming. Witness after witness testified against them, showing graphically how their villainous activities had resulted in the death of many people, the Ekaterinoslav pogroms organized by them having been among the worst of their kind in old Russia. The prisoners sat stolid, apparently crushed by the damning stories that poured from the lips of the witnesses. It was a vivid recital of revolutionary heroism on the one hand, and of counter-revolutionary treachery on the other. On either side of the prisoners stood Red Army soldiers with naked swords. The massed crowd of workers listened breathlessly to the stories of the murders committed by the prisoners. In the early days of the revolution such rats as these four would have been given short shrift and a speedy firing squad; but now, with the workers uncontested masters

of the situation, they would probably be let off with short sentences. We did not remain till the end of the trial.

From time to time trials of such murderers and spies, who were a prominent prop of the Czarist regime, take place in various cities in Soviet Russia, as fast as some chance or other brings about the exposure of these vermin. A few weeks before, in Moscow, we attended the trial of one Krott, a provocateur in Irkutsk before the world war. At the same time, in the very next room, two ex-Czarist officers were being tried and convicted of brutally murdering a soldier in 1913. Little did these two worthies think when they cold-bloodedly shot down that peasant lad 13 years before that the day would come when they would have to face a Workers' Court and make amends for their crime. They were given two and three years each in jail. The workers, victorious in the revolution, are inclined to be merciful even to such unspeakable creatures, now that their fangs are drawn and they can do but little harm.

Workers' Clubs

Important institutions in the various cities of Soviet Russia are the Workers' Clubs. These are the real social centers of the workers. There is nothing comparable to them in capitalist countries. They are equipped with innumerable departments for the education and entertainment of the workers, such as libraries, schools, theaters, gymnasiums, chess rooms, billiard rooms, rifle ranges, etc. They are maintained by the unions, either by individual unions where these are large enough, or otherwise by a combination of unions. They are tremendously popular. They exist in all the industrial centers and are rapidly on the increase. Comrade Ponomarev, the head of the All-Russian Trade Union Central Committee, recently stated that during the past two years the number of these clubs has increased 120%. Usually the workers pay small membership dues, 10 or 15 cents per month. The clubs as a rule are located in great mansions or other splendid buildings that were formerly the palaces of the rich.

In Ekaterinoslav we visited three of such clubs: that of the metal workers, that of the building trades, and a general Workers' Club. All are splendid institutions. They were so thronged with workers that it was often difficult to thread our way through the innumerable rooms and departments. All three have big

theaters and that night were running moving picture shows. The metal workers' club, enormously popular, is located in the steel mill district. The building workers have outgrown their present establishment and are building a magnificent structure nearby. The general workers' club, with 4,000 members, is located in a former capitalist club house. The furnishings are rich and luxurious. The club has a regular maze of rooms, all devoted to various forms of education and pleasure. In these three centers of proletarian culture and enjoyment, we made speeches, greetings and were enthusiastically received by the workers. It ended our first day in Ekaterinoslav.

The Steel Mills

Ekaterinoslav is an important steel center, with several large mills. Bright and early on our second day we started out to see these mills, eager to learn at first hand how the workers are getting on with the great task of conducting a modern steel industry. We visited two big plants a few miles out of town, on the banks of the Dneiper. One, the Petrovsky mill, employs 18,000 workers, and the other, the Lenin mill, employs 5,000. The larger plant was named after the president of the Ukrainian who was formerly a worker there. Both plants were owned before the revolution by Franco-Belgian capitalists, who promptly fled the country in 1917 when the workers dealt their death blow to capitalism in Russia.

As we looked out over the vast array of stacks, furnaces and mills comprising these gigantic steel works, we were reminded of Pittsburgh or Youngstown. It was difficult to realize that the workers actually had full control of these industries and without previous experience, were operating them. But immediately we entered the offices that great revolutionary fact was made quite clear to us. Workers' control fairly cried out to us from all sides. Pictures of Lenin and other revolutionary leaders decorated the walls. The whole atmosphere was intensely proletarian. The first place we went to was the office of the Communist Party factory nucleus, which has a membership of 2,200, besides the 2,400 members of the Communist Youth organization. The next section of the general offices that we visited was the headquarters of the factory committee of the Metal Workers'

Union, which has a membership of 22,500 in the plants. Besides the technical leaders of the industry, we also met representatives of the various other working class organizations, such for example as the M. O. P. R., or Red Aid, the international organization for the defense and protection of political prisoners, which has 12,000 members in the mills.

How do the workers operate these gigantic steel mills? As in the case of other industries, there are three elements to the management: the Communist Party, the trade unions, and the Soviet Government. The Government, through its organ, the Supreme Economic Council, selects the technical management of the plant, which is responsible for the actual operation of the industry; the trade unions look after the interests of the workers; and the Communist Party, the political organization of the workers, is the enlivening force in every phase of the institution, although not taking an official part in either the technical management of the industry or the direction of the unions. In the event of disputes between the plant management and the unions over wages and working conditions, which sometimes occur, they are referred first to the regional committee of the Metal Workers' Union, and eventually, if still unsettled, to the Ministry of Labor. In these two plants there was a record of 600 minor disputes in six months. Of these, 60% were won by the workers in direct conference with the management, and of those referred to higher bodies, 95% were eventually decided in favor of the workers. Strikes are of course unknown. The Russian workers' organizations control the government and through it own and operate the industries. Hence, for them to strike would be simply to strike against themselves.

We were shown through the plants by representatives of the Metal Workers' Union, accompanied by a number of technical engineers. One did not have to go 50 feet in order to realize that the workers were running the place. And they were carrying on their tasks with a vim and enthusiasm that workers never show under capitalism. We were astounded at the activity to be found in all departments. If an American capitalist, fed up on the theory that the workers cannot operate modern industry, could just get a glimpse of the way those Russians were working, he would have a sad awakening. These steel mill workers, you as the workers in Russian industry generally, are proving

beyond all question of doubt that the working class can operate the industries under free conditions of labor far more efficiently than the capitalists can with their slave system.

We were especially interested in figures dealing with the mills' production. On this point the engineers gave us detailed information relating to production of the blast furnaces, rail wire, plate, rod, and other rolling mills. For four full years, from 1917 to 1921, these mills, sharing in the utter paralysis of the metal industry which was brought about by the civil war and the capitalist blockade against Russia, were either shut down completely or operated at a negligible percentage of their capacity. Only in 1923 did the mills really get under way again, and then in the face of tremendous difficulties. At the time of our visit production in the Petrovsky mill was about 80% of pre-war and the Lenin mill 100%, despite the crippled condition of the mills. During the past year production increases of 50% or over were made in most of the departments, and during the coming year an increase of 60% is planned for the big Petrovsky mill. Four of the five big blast furnaces were in operation. The fifth, under repairs, will be blown in on May 1st.

Everywhere in Russia industries a cry is going up for capital to develop the mills, mines, and factories. It is a veritable "capital famine." Wherever we went the industrial directors and engineers complained of a lack of funds for development work. The Ekaterinoslav steel mills were no exception. Nevertheless they are contriving to do a tremendous amount in the way of expanding their capacity. The workers keenly realize the need to modernize the mills. They are building a big power plant and a whole series of new furnaces and other extensions and improvements which, in the next couple of years, will add at least 50% capacity to the plants. As an indication of the tempo of development, the plant engineers gave us the following table showing the amount of money spent on improvement work. The table is in roubles, a rouble being worth about 51 cents in American money:

		Year end.	Year end.	Year end.
1913	1919-22	Oct. 1, 1924	Oct. 1, 1925	Oct. 1, 1926
1,866,588	nothing	140,392	741,046	3,587,000

It was interesting to note the general attitude of the industrial engineers in these and other plants we visited. I was surprised to see the apparent interest that these technicians too

in the accomplishments and prospects of the plants. The great majority of the engineers in the Russian industry are from the old, pre-revolutionary days. In the revolution their sentiments were all for the employers and they took a determined stand against the rule of the workers. Occupying key positions, their years' long strikes and sabotage were enormous factors in paralyzing the industries and preventing their recovery. The struggle between the Russian workers and the technical engineers, the former trying to start the industries and the latter to block them, is a classic in the history of the world's class struggle. The workers have won. The revolution is a success. The engineers must work. Some do it with a good grace; others are manifestly out of sympathy with the new order. The workers are taking no chances. They place no reliance in the old engineers. They are rapidly educating new engineers, all of them Communists. Many technical schools are being developed. The one organized in connection with the two plants in question has 400 day students (who put in four hours study and four hours work daily in order to ground themselves simultaneously in theory and practice) and 250 night students.

I imagine that upon one occasion at least we put the sentiments of the engineers accompanying us to quite a strain. We were passing through a steel mill department and, as often happened, the workers wanted to know who we were and to hear a word from us. So we gave them a few minutes' talk. The only ones who could translate French and English were the engineers. It must have been quite a job for them to translate our revolutionary speeches; but apparently, judging from the reaction of the workers, they did their job passably well.

Although every effort is being put forth and every possible rouble invested to increase production in the Ekaterinoslav steel mills, money is not stinted in looking after the immediate welfare of the workers. Wages in these plants are on the average of 80% of pre-war rates. A 20% increase was given the workers in January. It is expected to exceed the pre-war wage rate in six months. Considering their many privileges, the workers are already far ahead of pre-war conditions. The 8-hour day is now universal, as against the 12-hour day before the revolution. All the workers get a two weeks' vacation yearly on full pay, except those at heavy or unhealthy work, who receive a month's

vacation. Even in this respect could be noted the wonderful strengthening of the economic system that is going on in every direction. In 1923 only 30% of the heavy workers got the regulation month's vacation; in 1924 it was increased to 60%, and in 1925 to 100%. During the past year 2,363 workers went to the union rest houses, for vacation places, for an average period of three weeks free of charge. Schools are maintained to teach the adult workers the mechanical trades and the elements of education. The plants have installed a large library, an excellent hospital, and a laboratory to study diseases of the industry. Safety appliances and practices have been widely introduced. The number of accidents yearly in the plants has been cut from 72,400 in 1913 to 18,702 in 1925.

The housing problem was always a bad one for the workers in these steel mills, there being little local accommodation and great numbers of the workers are forced to travel from 5 to 10 miles. The workers are now attacking this difficult problem earnestly. Last year, despite the general shortage of resources, 160 modern two and four-family houses were built convenient to the mills. The building program for the next three years provides for the erection of 3,000 more of such houses. The workers are extending and improving the street car line, and are carrying out a dozen other plans to relieve the housing and transportation problems. In every way they are improving their living standards.

Under Czardom the workers in these great industries had no social center; they were not allowed to get together in any way for their mutual education or enjoyment. But now, under the Soviet system of government, they are building an enormous Palace of Labor. It will cost 800,000 roubles and will be finished by the end of the year. The meeting hall will seat 6,000 workers and the theater 2,500. The building will contain a whole series of schools, libraries, clubs, dining rooms, etc., so extensive in scope that workers in capitalistic countries can hardly conceive of such an elaborate working class institution.

The foregoing paragraphs give at least a faint idea of how the revolutionary steel workers of Ekaterinoslav are meeting and mastering the many problems thrust upon them from every side in the great task of building the new proletarian society. The progress they are making and the enthusiasm they are showing

on a par with that of the workers generally in the industries throughout Soviet Russia.

The Local Labor Leaders

After our visit to the steel mills we met, in the evening, with the Central Committee of the Local Trades Council, which had been called together to greet us. These trade union leaders are for the most part the leading elements in the local Communist Party, the Soviet, the Co-operatives, and the various other proletarian organizations. What a keen body of men and women, and how different from the American type of labor leaders. Communists all, a few years ago they fought rifle in hand to overthrow Czarism and capitalism, and now they are building the new workers' society in the face of a world of difficulty.

Geram and I spoke; he on France and I on the United States. How keenly they questioned us. As usual they were especially interested in the United States. I had to answer at least 40 questions, in which the questioners showed how closely they followed international developments. They even wanted to know the exact relations and differences between company unions and B. & O. Union unions, of which developments they had already become familiar in a general way. I wondered how it would be until a gathering of trade union leaders in an American industrial center the size of Ekaterinoslav would consist of such splendid revolutionary fighters as these. They gave us warm greetings for the workers of France and the United States.

A Railroad Shop

Being a railroad worker, I was interested to learn how the Ekaterinoslav railroaders are conducting their section of the industry. So together with the heads of the local railroad union, and parting company with Geram, we visited the big Ekaterinoslav railroad repair shops. We were accompanied by Melnikov, formerly a member of the I. W. W. in Chicago, and now an official of the Union. First we visited the union headquarters, which is located in a score or more rooms in the same big building as the general administration of the railroad. This is the typical arrangement. In Soviet Russia the union is considered as indispensable to the operation of the railroad as is the technical administration. Hence, both are commonly housed together. What

a shock it would be to haughty American railroad capitalists. Atterbury for example, to see the American railroad unions established in the beautiful office buildings of the general administrations of the American railroads. And what a still greater shock it would be to see the heads of the railroad administrations and the unions in the United States as members of the revolutionary Communist Party. That is the situation in Soviet Russia.

We visited every department in the big shops, which now employ 1,800 workers. As usual we were deeply interested in the vital question of production. Some of the American workers wonder why. But the answer is simple. One of the most important social processes now going on in all the world is the struggle of the Russian workers, in the face of monumental difficulties, to master the problems of operating and building their industry. The fate of the Russian revolution, and profound consequences to the world's labor movement, depend upon whether or not they succeed in this great task. This explains why, in every plant visited on our whole trip, our first attention was always directed towards learning whether production is being successfully carried on.

The Ekaterinoslav railroad workers are making a splendid showing. Production is now at about 110% or better of the pre-war rate and is being constantly improved. In 1921, at the depth of the crisis in industry, 2,800 workers in the shops made heavy repairs on an average of but one locomotive per month. In 1926, 1,800 workers make heavy repairs upon 13 to 14 engines per month. Before the war 1,700 workers in these shops made heavy repairs on an average upon 163 engines per year, with a nine hour day and 10% overtime. Now, 1,800 workers, with an eight-hour day and no overtime (in Soviet Russia overtime is taboo), are making heavy repairs on 160 engines per year. Besides the work is now being done very much better than previously. Before the war, despite the fact that the locomotives as a whole were newer, each locomotive averaged only 40,000 kilometers of road work per each light repair, as against 49,000 kilometers at the present time, and they averaged for heavy repairs only 142,000 kilometers as against 168,000 now. An equally good showing is being made with repairing freight cars. The "dead" locomotive problem is solved. In 1913 there was an average of 13% of locomotives out of commission. This was no

at. In 1920, the number mounted to 50%. Now it is reduced to 16% and is rapidly going lower. Traffic on the railroads, an important line of 2,200 kilometers, exceeds the pre-war volume. In 1913 the road operated 48 "pairs" of freight trains of 50 cars each; in 1926 it is operating 45 "pairs" of trains of 75 cars each. It is only one indication of many that the Russian workers have entered the tremendous problem of rehabilitating the ruined railroad.

Average wages of the workers in the shops are at approximately pre-war standards and are rapidly rising. There are wide differences between the wage rates of the unskilled and skilled, due primarily to the great shortage of skilled labor. The policy of the trade unions is to eliminate these differences as quickly as possible by raising the wages of the unskilled more rapidly than those of the skilled. The locomotive drivers are the best paid workers on the railroad, making about 200 roubles per month. Last year the general average wage of the shop workers was 56 roubles, it has since been raised to 82 roubles and further advances are in prospect.

Much of the work in these railroad shops, as is also the case in many other Russian industries, is done upon a piece-work basis. This fact will shock some American workers who only know the piece-work system under capitalism, where it is a scheme to fatten the exploiters at the expense of the workers. But in Soviet Russia the situation is completely different. There is no exploiting class. The benefits of increased production flow to the workers, not to greedy capitalists. Hence the workers accept the piece-work system now when an increase in production is so vitally necessary to the progress of the revolution. They are the sole beneficiaries of it. For the same reason they also welcome the Taylor system, labor saving machinery, and other means of increasing their output, whereas in the United States and other capitalist countries, where the benefits of such inventions go to the employers, workers instinctively oppose them.

All the railroad workers, road and shop, are members of one national industrial union, which has system organizations on each of the 27 railroads in the Soviet Union. These system organizations are divided into branches. The Ekaterinoslav branch has jurisdiction over all trades for 225 miles of road. It has 10,000 members and 41 sub-branches. The Ekaterinoslav shop

section branch has 2,200 members and 11 sub-branches, organized not according to crafts, but shops, such as the blacksmith shop, foundry, wheel shop, office, power plant, etc. A general shop committee connects all these sub-branches. It carries on all the economic, cultural, and other work of the union locally. The well-knit, revolutionary industrial union of the railroad workers, embracing all categories of railroad workers, makes the unions of American railroad workers, split into 16 autonomous organizations, look very primitive.

All the workers in these shops are members of the union. As dues they pay 2% of their wages, which is the standard rate for all Russian unions. Membership is voluntary. The many special advantages accruing to union membership, as well as the general advantages of better wages, working conditions, etc., are sufficient to induce all workers to come into the organizations. In Soviet Russia a trade union card is a sort of certificate of industrial citizenship, a proof that one is a useful producer and a valuable member of society. The union member, for example, pays only one-third as much rent as a person who does not belong to a union. His theater tickets cost him 50% less than the set price, and his street car fare likewise. If he gets out of a job or is sick he is first given two weeks' full pay, then two weeks' pay to check off against the vacation he is allowed, and after that he receives unemployment relief from the union and the government equal to at least 50% or 75% of his wages. Women workers get 8 weeks off with pay before and after childbirth, and sometimes, as we were smilingly told, when the doctors get their dates wrong, the women get a longer period. All the railroad workers are given six tickets yearly, good to ride over the entire railroad system they work upon.

The Ekaterinoslav railroad workers have a shop school attended by 250 students. They stated that before the revolution 600 of the workers in the shops were illiterate. Now all can read and write. The workers have their own big theater, dance hall, dining room, etc., right in the shops. When the workers are sick or run down they are sent to the splendid rest homes maintained by their national union in the Crimea and the Caucasus. During the past year 365 of the Ekaterinoslav railroad shop workers spent several weeks each at these rest homes free of charge.

Formerly these places were the chateaus and palaces of rich landowners and capitalists. In Ekaterinoslav, the railroad union maintains a night sanitarium for workers who are underweight and need building up. We visited this place, a beautiful mansion with 80 beds, on a bluff overlooking the Dneiper. When the workers undergoing treatment finish their day's work they go to these houses where they sleep and where they are given, free of cost, the best of food and general care.

In these mills and shops, in fact in all the industries we visited, we were struck by the militant and enthusiastic spirit of the workers. They just glowed in welcoming us. They were so justly proud of their achievements in operating the industries and of their many organizations. They were imbued with such a vivid sense of the great victory they had won in the revolution. How many quiet chuckles we met when the workers recalled the way they had chased out the capitalists and landlords who had tyrannized over them so long. And if the workers' sense of victory is fresh and keen, the sense of defeat of the remnants of the former ruling class is no less vivid. I remember a little aristocratic looking ex-landlord, pointed out to us at the station, who had been dispossessed of the great mansion and big theater he had formerly owned. He looked as though he had just lost his property the day before.

Despite the rapid progress they are making, the workers of Ekaterinoslav are still poor. But what are their present difficulties in comparison with the terrors of the years gone by, in the acute phases of the bitter struggle to destroy capitalism and to lay the foundation of the new society? During the famine of 1921, for example, 100 of the workers in the railroad plant we visited starved to death, 15 of them actually dying in the shops. We were inspired by the heroic Ekaterinoslav workers. After three unforgettable days with them, we reluctantly bade Smerdoff and the other workers' representatives "Good Bye," and took the train for Stalino, a 14 hours' ride almost due east.

CHAPTER II

Stalino

We arrived at Stalino about eight in the morning. We were met by a delegation from the Stalino Central Labor Union, headed by Tcherinoff, the secretary. Then came a seven mile carriage drive to town through black Ukrainian mud, so deep and gummy that automobiles could not get through it. The country is of a high, wide, naked, rolling character, greatly resembling parts of Montana, Utah, and Colorado. As far as the eye could see the landscape was dotted, here and there, with mills, factories and coal mines.

Stalino is in the heart of the Donetz Basin, the greatest coal producing center of Soviet Russia. It is a city of about 70,000 inhabitants. It is the center of a network of steel mills, coke ovens, coal mines, and chemical works. In the two steel mills at Stalino and Makeevko (12 miles away) there are 27,000 workers. Within a radius of 50 miles of Stalino there are 65,000 working coal miners. The town was founded 57 years ago by Hughes, a British steel manufacturer, and given his name. It is now called after Stalin, the secretary of the Russian Communist Party. The industries of the district were established and owned almost entirely by British, French and Belgian capitalists, who promptly fled when the revolution took place. The district was formerly a notorious slave pen, the 12-hour day prevailing in all the mills and mines. Now the six and eight-hour day is universal. During the civil war the Don Basin country was the center of bitter struggle. Stalino had eight different governments, including the Germans, Wrangel, Skoropodsky, Krasnov, Denikin, Machno, and the Communists.

The Stalino Steel Mills

The steel mills in Stalino are named in honor of Stalin, those in Makeevko after Tomsky. All over Soviet Russia the workers commonly give the industries the names of prominent revolutionary leaders. The Stalino steel mills are right in the city. They employ 12,000 workers. They are the center of a

big "combination," definitely under one management, of coal mines, steel mills, coke ovens, and chemical works. Right in the mill yard are the coal mines. There are also big coke ovens, and connected with them, chemical works to utilize the coal tar products from the coke production. The great steel mills carry on the whole process of steel manufacture, from the smelting of the iron ore to the rolling of the finished product in the shape of rails, bars, plates, etc. Along with Colosevitch, secretary of the local Metal Workers' Union, Tcherbakoff of the Central Labor Council, and various engineers, we were shown through the whole network of industries comprised in the "combination."

Before starting the long trip, and as we sat in the luxurious private office of the former capitalist owner Hughes, I inquired for information as to the actual extent the workers are taking part in the technical management of these big industries. I was given a list of the 37 principal officials in the plants, with a record of their previous education and positions. The director of the "combination," which employs 30,000 workers, was formerly a working coal miner. His two chief assistants at the head of the steel mills and the coal mines were respectively a metal worker and a coal miner. Of the 37 leading executive officials, 21 were formerly workers "at the bench." Of the rest, 18 had public school educations and three had been in high school, 16 were listed as having college educations. These, principally engineers, are mostly in charge of the more purely technical sides of the industry, under the direction of the workers.

The above is a characteristic situation in present-day Russian industry. The important plants are directly in charge of Red Directors, who are Communists, and mostly workers. As a class the technical engineers, who were the superintendents and managers of pre-revolutionary days, are politically too unreliable to be entrusted with central responsible conditions, except in the case of that percentage of engineers who, like some of the officers of the former Czar's army, have declared wholeheartedly for the new social regime. At first the Red Directors of the factories, largely inexperienced and faced by a hostile technical staff, had a most difficult task to carry on production. But now they have become expert and the resistance of the engineers is quite generally broken. The present rapid expansion of Rus-

sian industry is proof enough that the Red Directors are making a success of their hard jobs.

A few figures will show how production is on the increase in these steel mills. In 1913, their total output for the year of all steel and iron products was 34½ million poods of 40 pounds each. In 1924 the output was 15 million poods, or 43% of pre-war production, and in 1925 it had increased to 26 1-3 million poods or 76%. Further big increases will be made in the present year. Interesting tables are those showing the increase in the production of finished steel and coke:

Finished Steel

1913—1,172,000 poods monthly.....	100%
1923—No production.	
1924—380,000 poods monthly.....	32%
1925—755,000 poods monthly.....	64%
Estimate for	
1926—1,022,068 poods monthly.....	90%
Coke	
1913—2,223,000 poods	100%
1925—1,653,000 poods	74%
Estimate for	
1926—2,790,000 poods	125%

Of the five blast furnaces, four are in operation and one is undergoing repairs. Elaborate programs exist for the extension and replacement of the equipment in these mills, much of which is either badly worn or out of date. Reports from the nearby Makeevko mills show similar rapid recovery, they having increased their output in 1925 more than 200% over that of 1921.

Wages in these plants are about on a par with those in the Ekaterinoslav, still somewhat below the pre-war level but rapidly advancing. In these plants the union has an elaborate network of the educational and other organizations to be found in all industries. There is a trade school with 320 students. In 1924, 973 workers were given treatment in the union sanitariums and 1,530 sent to rest homes. In 1925 the numbers were increased to 1,228 for the sanitariums and 2,907 for the rest homes, this increase reflecting the general improvement in conditions. The unions in Stalino are now preparing to build a great workers' club house to cost two million roubles.

The Stalino steel workers were particularly proud of the fact that in their big mill they have a "yatchayka," or Communist branch, with 2,200 members, which they claimed is one of the largest in the whole Russian Communist Party. They were also proud that the 17,000 Communist Party members and 21,000 Communist Youth members in the Stalino district, constitute the strongest Communist organization in all the Ukraine. Some American workers will wonder why the membership of the Russian Communist Party is not larger, why for the whole country it averages, together with the Communist Youth organization, only about one-third as many members as the trade unions. The reason lies in the difference in the functions of the Party and the trade unions. The tasks of the trade unions are relatively simple, to look after the economic and, to a certain extent, the cultural needs of the workers, and their doors are wide open for the participation of the whole working class. On the other hand, the Communist Party has the great task of leading the revolution in all its phases. Its function is to map out and execute policies for every social institution, the government, the industries, the army, the schools, etc., etc. Consequently, its standards of membership are necessarily higher. It is difficult to join the Party. Before a worker can become a member he must show that he is a student of proletarian economics and history, and that he is a militant supporter of the revolution. It is next to impossible for a non-worker to join. If the Party were to throw open its doors to the masses generally, it would soon be larger than the unions.

We ended our first day in Stalino by going to a moving picture show in the evening. It was a film entitled "Labor and Capital" and it was typical of shows the workers now see in Soviet Russia. It portrayed a long and bitter struggle between the workers and the employers, which culminated in a victorious armed uprising and the establishment of a Soviet government by the workers. We thought of the tremendous sensation such a picture would make if it could be shown in the United States.

A Coal Mine

We wanted to see a coal mine. So, on the morning of our second day in Stalino, we went to visit one. It was about eight

miles from town over dirt roads which, feeling the first urge of spring, were giving up their months' long frost and were turning into streams of incredibly sticky mud.

On our way we saw a couple of N. E. P. mines, or mines operated by private individuals. These were two or three-man affairs, with a single horse hoisting the coal. Finally we arrived at our destination, a group of five mines formerly owned by a French company which located there 35 years ago. We were given a splendid welcome by the miners. They told us that Lloyd George was expected to visit Stalino during the coming summer, but that he would never get the welcome given to labor delegations such as we. The mines produce bituminous coal. Donning heavy overalls, and boots, for the mines were well we went below and spent several hours visiting the various sections of the mine. Many of the workers were women, but they were only employed on top of the ground. Formerly the women worked below digging coal.

These mines were running full blast, three shifts. Production was almost exactly 100% of the pre-war rate. The following figures show the rapid recovery that is being made in the local mining situation.

Production Table

(A pood is 40 pounds)

1913—	3,700,000	poods	monthly.
1922—	1,190,000	"	"
1923—	2,118,000	"	"
1924—	3,120,000	"	"
1925—	3,623,000	"	"

The program provides for increasing the production of these mines to 4,500,000 poods monthly by 1927, which will be the greatest production in their history. The mining engineers also showed us plans for opening up a new mine which within three years will double the capacity of coal production. In spite of rapid increases in wages, the cost of mining coal is steadily decreasing. In 1925, it cost 19 kopeks to mine a pood of coal; in 1926 only 16 kopeks. In the group of mines and coke ovens 8,000 workers are employed, 1,200 working in the mine we visited. The rapid improvement taking place in the industry is merely a

sample of what is going on throughout the mining industry in Russia generally. Compare this, for example, with the stagnation that has settled upon coal mining in England, United States, and other countries. The group of mines were being directed by a former worker in the mines.

Russian technical engineers, those dating from the old regime, are inherently conservative. Most of them whom we spoke to were very skeptical of present-day Soviet Russia being able to learn much from American industrial practices. They claimed that conditions in Russia are so different that a specific Russian technique must be developed. The Red Directors of the industries, who are Communists, have a different idea. They are keen to use in their plants all that is applicable from American industry. The director of these mines had just completed a three-months' tour of the coal mining districts in the United States, during which he had visited the most highly developed mines in the country and studied the latest improvements in the industry. As a consequence of his trip he was busy introducing new machinery and methods into the mines under his control, with resultant economies. Among other improvements he had brought in 17 Sullivan coal cutting machines, with a saving of 40%. Formerly all the coal digging was done by hand. Similar improvements in technique are being introduced into the mines everywhere. The industry is on the verge of a technical revolution.

Simultaneously with the improvement of the industry is going a great improvement in the living and working conditions of the miners. However urgent the need for increasing production may be, the Russian workers never forget the main purpose of the revolution, which is to improve the life of the worker. Hence, as they build the industries, they at the same time carry on the most elaborate activities for raising the general level of life of the workers. In these mines there was no exception to the general rule. The 12-hour day of pre-revolutionary times has been replaced by an eight-hour day, with a six-hour day for workers in heavy or unhealthy work. Wages, which are rapidly on the increase, are now almost at pre-war levels. The miners are given free rent, light, coal, medical attendance, education, etc. Safety precautions have been so developed that major accidents, once a terror in the Russian mines, have been practically eliminated. The Stalino Miners' Union is spending a mil-

lion dollars for the erection of six buildings in the surrounding towns. One of these, a gigantic workers' club, is to be built in the town where the mine is located that we visited. These clubs, embodying innumerable educational and recreational features, are letting a real ray of sunlight into the lives of the miners who formerly were little better than serfs.

The housing problem is a severe one throughout Soviet Russia. Last year the government spent 100,000,000 roubles in building workers' houses, and this year it will spend at least 250,000,000. In Stalino, as a hang-over from the old regime, the problem is also difficult. But it is being attacked vigorously. Hundreds of houses have been built in the past year and many hundreds more are to be constructed. Piles of material were on all sides. We visited the new cottages and found them a tremendous improvement over the old shacks in which the workers were herded like cattle by the capitalist exploiters.

One thing that struck us in our contact with the Stalino miners, and in fact with workers generally in Russian industry, was the spirit of enthusiasm everywhere manifest. We spoke to many scores of workers and never heard a single serious complaint made against existing conditions. How different from 1921, when the Russian workers were in the very depths of the industrial crisis. Then they would talk freely of their hardship to visitors in the plants and factories. But now these workers realize that the new society is a success, and this is the basis of the general optimism which prevails on all sides. I could not help but compare the hopeful attitude of the bituminous miners in Stalino with the despondency that one finds in the bituminous fields of the United States, where the union miners are being starved through mass unemployment.

The Stalino steel workers arranged a celebration to greet us on the night of the second day of our stay there. But we arrived in town so late after our visit to the coal mine, that we had to miss our train to Kharkoff in order to make the meeting. We got to the celebration a good two hours late. A thousand or more steel workers were assembled in their theater to meet us. The first part of the affair was devoted to speech making and the exchanging of revolutionary greetings; the last part to a dramatic production. The play was a typical workers' propaganda drama, such as one finds everywhere in present-day Sov-

iet Russia. The actors, who gave a splendid performance, all worked in the steel mill. Likewise the orchestra, which was led by a former bandsman of the Czar's army who had been a war prisoner in Germany. We voted a success the day's visit to the mine and also the evening spent in the workers' theater.

Chemical Plants

Stalino is especially a district of heavy industry, it being primarily based upon the related combination of coal mines, steel mills, coke ovens, and chemical works. In order to get a real picture of the workings of all these industries, we paid a visit to a couple of the several chemical plants in the district. They lay several miles out of town and were reached by the usual drive through the deep mud.

The first place we visited was a plant for the manufacture of coal tar and coal tar products. It is located in connection with a big set of coke ovens, which in turn are connected up with a nearby coal mine. The chemical plant utilizes the coal gas from the coke ovens, turning out many products of this wonderful gas, such as ammonia-sulphate, naphthalene, benzol, etc.

This plant employs 200 workers. It was founded by a French company in 1911 on a 10-year lease, and it was built to last only for that period. Now it is being remodeled and rebuilt. It was one of the first plants built in Russia for the development of coal tar products, in many cases the coal gas produced at the coke ovens being still largely wasted. We were shown about the place by a little Latvian engineer. Production is now exceeding the pre-war rate and is being increased.

The second chemical works we visited, a mile or so away from the first, is a highly interesting nitrogen factory, employing 450 workers. Its basis of operation is the manufacture of ammonia water, piped from the other chemical works we visited, into various "end" products, such as nitrogen, spirits of ammonia, ammonia salt-peter, carbonate of ammonia, nitro-benzol, etc.

The plant was built in the closing years of the war. It was the center of much diplomatic intrigue, because the chief chemist in charge discovered certain chemical processes which the allied powers deemed very essential to the successful prosecution of the war. British and French agents hovered about the place

seeking to learn the secret, which eventually they got. The plant was closed from 1917 until 1922. It produces especially high class nitrogen products, which are in great demand in various European countries, principally for the manufacture of explosives. It cannot fill the many orders with which it is at present swamped.

Characteristic of the great increase in production taking place generally in Russian industry, the output of this plant is going ahead by leaps and bounds. The two tables following are typical:

Liquid Ammonia

1st quarter 1925—	197 tons monthly.
2nd " "	—245 " "
3rd " "	—293 " "
4th " "	—335 " "
1st " 1926—	363 " "

Ammonia Water

Year ending Oct. 1, 1924—	300 tons monthly.
Year ending Oct. 1, 1925—	600 " "
Year ending Oct. 1, 1926—	1250 " "

The plant is being rapidly extended. By the end of 1926 the manufacture of ammonia water will reach 2,000 tons monthly. The ammonia section is now producing five times as much as the plant was built for. On all sides we were shown new departments and extensions of old ones, by the engineers who accompanied us. They seemed enthusiastic over the future of the industry. Every section of the place was growing and expanding. Great piles of building material were stacked about in preparation for elaborate extensions of the plant this summer. The workers were even prouder than the engineers in showing the progress they were making in building the industry.

The workers and engineers in this chemical plant, expressing the same point of view that we found in all the industries, constantly emphasized the existing shortage of capital to develop the industry, of money wherewith to build the many improvements they had planned. But this shortage of capital was not preventing them from rapidly and radically bettering the

conditions of the workers. Wages had increased 30% in the past year, and more increases were planned. In 1925 they had built 20 four-family houses to help solve the housing shortage. In 1926 they are building 60 more four-family houses. Soon the shacks and huts of the pre-revolutionary era will be only a noisome memory. In this plant and its surroundings, even as in so many other industrial centers of Soviet Russia, one could truly see Socialism growing under one's eyes.

A Technical School.

One of the great problems now confronting Russian industry is to produce a body of revolutionary technical engineers to lead in the operation of the mills, mines, and factories. There is at present a serious shortage of such workers. Before the revolution the industries in Russia were owned principally by British, French, German, Belgian and American capitalists. Large bodies of the engineers were of the respective nationalities of the capitalists. When the revolution came they fled the country with the employers. Many Russian engineers followed them, and of those that remained behind large numbers became practically useless because of their opposition to the Soviet government. Hence, to develop new engineers in sympathy with the workers' society is an urgent problem. It is being met by the establishment of technical schools in many of the industrial centers.

Stalino has an excellent example of these new technical schools in its college for mining engineers, which we visited. This important institution is named after Artiem, former president of the All-Russian Union of Miners, who, together with six delegates to the R. I. L. U. congress in 1921, was killed in a railroad accident. The school occupies 28 buildings, several of them the best in town. It has 400 regular students and 450 worker students employed in the industry. It has a body of 40 teachers. The school is five years old. The course is of three years' duration, and embraces all branches of mining engineering. Like all new institutions in Soviet Russia, it is rapidly growing. Last year it turned out its first substantial class of graduates, 40 young Communist engineers. The school has a splendid technical library of 30,000 volumes, and a whole series of metallurgical museums, laboratories, etc. Plans are now on foot to gather

all the departments of the school into one big institution, which will be erected in the near future.

The students are all workers or children of workers; 12% of them are women. Each week they study five days in the school and work one day in the mines, thus combining theory and practice. The students are supported by the state, each receiving 21 roubles per month, of which they pay 13½ for room and board. The entrance requirements are modest. The workers wishing to take the course must know how to read and have an understanding of arithmetic. Especially they must be grounded in the fundamentals of Leninism. All the students are members either of the Communist Party or the Communist Youth organization.

How different the atmosphere in this school from that in an American educational institution. Instead of being afflicted with the dry-rot of capitalist ideas, the Russian students are aflame with revolutionary spirit and enthusiasm. They are to be the key builders of the new society. Reluctantly bidding them "Good Bye" and taking a farewell supper with our comrades of the Communist Party and the trade unions, we were soon on our way to Kharkoff, an all-night ride northward.

CHAPTER III

Kharkoff

Kharkoff is the capital city of the Ukraine. It is an important and rapidly growing industrial center of approximately 150,000 inhabitants. The trade unions have a membership locally of 160,000, of whom 25,000 are metal workers. Like most of the Ukrainian cities, Kharkoff was the center of a bitter struggle during the civil wars. The government changed hands 13 times in 4 years. Many of the factories were practically demolished and production stopped in them by the counter-revolutionaries in these struggles.

We arrived in town about nine in the morning. The railroad yards were full of new and repaired cars—the long strings of dead engines and delapidated freight cars which were, a few years ago, such a striking feature of Russian railroading are now practically eliminated. The streets were bustling with activity. Automobiles were on all sides. The girl "newsboys" were selling the local daily paper, "The Communist," and everybody was reading it. We were accompanied by a delegate from Stalino to a local conference of the Communist Party. Heading for the trade union offices, we mounted a new auto-bus, one of many put upon the streets of Kharkoff in recent months. Most of the leading cities in Soviet Russia are installing these bus lines. Moscow has a dozen of them; established within the last 18 months. They are a big success. Many new buildings along our way to the immense "Palace of Labor" attested the fact that Kharkoff, like other Russian cities, is experiencing the beginning of a great building boom, which is bound to become more intense in the next few years.

An Agricultural Machinery Plant

We had only a dozen hours to spend in Kharkoff, so we had to make haste and to utilize our time fully. Further need for hurry was the fact that it was Saturday and the factories stopped work early. After the usual enthusiastic greeting by the leaders of the Communist Party and the Trade Unions, we were whirled away in an automobile from the Labor headquarters to

the "Sickle and Hammer Harvester Works," in company with Solovieff, secretary of the Kharkoff Metal Workers' Union, and several local newspaper men. This plant manufactures a general line of harvesting machinery. It was formerly owned by a Russian company. It now employs 3,300 workers. As part of his general plan to ruin Russian industries so far as he could, the counter-revolutionary general, Denikin, practically destroyed the plant at the time he was forced to abandon Kharkoff.

At the time of our visit the plant was working full blast in an effort to satisfy the ravenous market for its products. The Russian peasants are developing a tremendous demand for agricultural machinery. This is only one phase of the great awakening, political and economic, that is taking place amongst them and manifestations of which are to be seen on all sides as one travels through Soviet Russia. An interesting example we saw of this on our way to Stalino was the village Ulianov, named after Lenin. In this place the peasants have procured an electric motor, "hooked" it to a small stream nearby, and are lighting their village with electricity. The revolution is stirring the country districts as well as the cities.

The table below indicates the progress being made by the plant in increasing production. The extreme low tide of production was in 1920. Since then the recovery has been continuous and rapid. Production is now far in excess of the pre-war rate. It would be still greater but for a shortage in materials, which is gradually being overcome. An interesting detail on the material question was great piles of broken machinery, to be used for scrap, that had been gathered all over the Ukraine from the factories shattered in the civil wars by the counter-revolutionaries.

Yearly Production (In gold roubles)

(Economic Year ends Oct. 1.)

1913	3,200,000	1922	414,000
1918	534,000	1923	1,500,000
1919	240,000	1924	2,500,000
1920	178,000	1925	4,800,000
1921	245,000	Program for 1926,	8,000,000

The productivity of the individual workers is 120% of pre-war standards and is on the increase. Wages are considerably in excess of what they were under the old regime. All the workers are members of the Metal Workers' Union. When passing through the wood working department, which employs 500 workers, I explained to the trade union officials accompanying us how American craft unionists would organize such a plant, with a dozen or more unions taking in the members of their respective crafts. They ridiculed such a primitive type of organization and said that anyone who should propose that for Soviet Russia would probably be adjudged insane. The principle of the Russian unions is to organize all the workers of a given industry, regardless of trade, color, nationality, or any other consideration, into one union. The workers are enthusiastic supporters of their national union, which has 680,000 members.

The plant is being rapidly extended and improved to meet the increasing demand. When passing through the foundry, where the molders had just finished pouring a heat, I stated that in the United States much of such work is done by machinery. The engineers assured me that they were fully aware of the backwardness of their equipment and were sparing no efforts to bring it up to date. Shortly afterwards they showed us, among the many other departments that are being built, a big structure of reinforced concrete that was being constructed for a modern foundry. Appliances for sanitation and safety, which were deemed needless luxuries in the old days, are being installed in all the plants.

The spirit of the workers was wonderful. It was just quitting time and they crowded about us. They proposed that we take greetings to the metal workers of America, and they insisted that we visit the beautiful "Lenin corners." These are to be found in all Russian factories. In some plants we found as many as 30 of them. They are established right in the work places. They are usually a cluster of revolutionary pictures and literature. They are living symbols of the revolution.

An Electrical Plant

Bidding "Good Bye" to the workers in the Harvester Plant, we went to visit a big electrical plant not far away. We arrived just as the workers began to pour out in streams, homeward.

bound after their week's work. This is a very important plant in Russian industry. It employs 5,000 workers, of whom 650 are women. The entire working force belongs to the Metal Workers' Union. The plant was formerly owned by the General Electric Company of Germany.

The institution has an interesting history. Before the world war the German General Electric trust, wishing to extend its tentacles of control into Russia, planned this great factory. It had proceeded so far that the machinery of the plant was already constructed and had reached the docks of Riga when the war broke out. The Czar's government immediately seized the plant and had it erected in 1916. When the revolution took place the Soviet government confiscated it. But the German capitalists were reluctant to let it go. When the Brest-Litovsk treaty was signed, one of the terms that were forced upon the Russians at the point of the bayonet was an agreement to pay for this plant, together with other German industries. However, to date these payments were never made.

The plant has modern equipment. It compares with the best American electrical factories. Its main section consists of a great concrete structure 400 yards long, admirably adapted to the work. It has a big power plant adjoining. The original cost of the institution was 12,000,000 roubles. The plant manufactures electrical appliances of all sorts, from electric bulbs to the biggest electrical machinery made in the history of Russia. It is swamped with orders for electrical apparatus from the mining, metal, rail road, and general transport industries. It is an especially important factor in producing the machinery for the great electrification project that is being put through for all of Soviet Russia. We were informed that so busy is the plant that commodities ordered now are contracted for delivery two years hence.

The present output is far in excess of the production of any previous time in the life of the plant. It is mounting by leaps and bounds, as evidenced by the following table:

Monthly Production (In gold roubles)

1923	140,000
1924	220,000
1925	463,000
1926	600,000

Plans are being worked out for the extension of the plant. At present a big foundry is being built. The director informed us that the building program will double the capacity of the plant in three years. In all the departments the most modern methods are being introduced, the engineers being particularly enthusiastic to install the American conveyor system. All about this big plant one could see the tangible institutions of the new society taking shape. A big hospital was being built for the workers and a large number of new houses. The one complaint that we heard on all sides was the need for capital to finance the various developmental projects.

In the luxurious main offices of the plant, the atmosphere was intensely proletarian. On the walls hung the pictures of Lenin and other leaders of the revolution. In an inner room, which formerly was the sacred premises of the capitalist exploiters, the factory committee of the workers was holding a business meeting. As we talked to the chief engineer someone turned on the radio and we heard a chorus singing a revolutionary song in the local club of the Metal Workers' Union.

We were shown about the plant by the Red Director, a Communist, who was formerly a worker at the bench. He spoke German, which brings to mind a peculiar condition which prevailed in pre-war Russian industry. Most of the mills, mines, and factories were owned by foreign capitalists. They were little nationalistic islands, so to speak, in Russia. The heads of the industries, the engineers, and the foremen, spoke the language of the foreign capitalist who owned the place. Remnants of this condition still exist, it being common to run onto workers and others in these plants who speak either French, German, or whatever was the language of the former owners.

The plant has an extensive technical staff of 250, of whom 10 are graduate engineers. This staff is making real progress in improving the products and production methods. The four highest paid engineers receive 350 roubles per month, which is about four times the average wage of a worker. The others get 300 roubles or less. Only a small fraction of these technical workers are Party members. These cannot receive more than the Party maximum of 225 roubles, which is the limit in wages allowed to any member of the Russian Communist Party, including even those occupying the highest Party and government posts.

This situation, with only a few of the technical experts in this key plant being members of the Communist Party, illustrates the pressing need for the development of revolutionary technicians. The workers are aware of this necessity, as the growth of technical schools indicates. In connection with the big electrical plant there is an excellent technical school, providing courses in all branches of electrical engineering. It is the best of its kind in Russia, and is so organized that even workers who cannot read are started on the way to the acquirement of technical knowledge. All the students are Communists. The school is making a definite contribution to the solution of the problem of producing revolutionary engineers and builders for the new society.

Another interesting feature of this plant was the mass education of apprentices that was going on. We saw large numbers of boys and girls being systematically instructed in the elements of the mechanical trades. A new class of beginners, numbering several score, were being taught in unison the fundamentals of filing and hammering. We inquired as to how the girls fared at learning the mechanical trades. The director was somewhat skeptical of their ability as machinists. Engineers in other plants we visited had a different opinion, maintaining that they were just as good workers as the boys. In many industries one encounters such mass training of apprentices. These young workers are recruits in the great army of skilled workers which Soviet Russia must create to satisfy the needs of her rapidly expanding industries.

The Metal Workers' Club

After our visit to the agricultural machinery and electrical plants, the metal workers with us insisted that we go to inspect their club. It proved to be well worth our visit. It is housed in a big building, constructed in 1921. The club is an especially fine example of this new and vital workers' institution, so popular in Soviet Russia. The headquarters of the Kharkoff Metal Workers' Union is in the club. The club possesses a splendid theater and lecture hall together with numerous meeting rooms. It has a whole net work of chess, checker, and domino rooms. There is an elaborate radio equipment, a large buffet, general study rooms, and technical schools. An interesting current feature

was an exhibition of Wall Journals from the various metal factories, prizes being offered for the most beautiful and effective. Many of the specimens were real works of art.

The club contains a special room for the M. O. P. R., or organization for the relief of working class political prisoners, and of course, a beautiful Lenin corner. The club has its own general orchestra, and also a special orchestra for the women; and in each of the local metal factories there is a band for mass marching by the workers. There is a department for the study of the construction and use of firearms, and another to teach mothers how to care for their children. The club has a splendid gymnasium, and close by is a big field for track and field sports. Over 1,000 members of this club take active part in these sports. The club has a fine library of 90,000 volumes and a special children's library. The big library is of the circulating type, the various metal factories drawing books periodically for their own libraries. So hungry are the workers for knowledge that even this extensive library system is not enough. The Kharkoff Metal Workers' Union has appropriated 60,000 roubles to buy more books. These workers may well be proud of their splendid club.

In the evening leaders of the Ukrainian Metal Workers paid us an "official Good Bye." They gave us a parting supper, at which appeared our old friend Smirnoff of Ekaterinoslav. What rousing revolutionary speeches they made; what burning messages of solidarity they extended to American workers. We were honored and thrilled by these militant and veteran revolutionary fighters in the cause of Labor. After the speeches we made an auto trip through the town in a big Mercedes car owned by the local Metal Workers' Union. Then came a hurried trip to catch the train to Moscow, where we proposed to stay a couple of days before going on to our next point of investigation, Leningrad. Our visit in Kharkoff, literally packed with interesting sights and happenings, was done. We had made the best of our 12 hours in town. It was of the most instructive and inspiring days of our lives.

CHAPTER IV

Leningrad

From Moscow to Leningrad is about 450 miles. The last time I traveled it was in 1921. It then took 20 hours on a dilapidated train. Now our party covered it in 12 hours on a train up-to-date in all essentials. As we approached the city the smoke pouring from the forest of factory stacks showed that Leningrad is also experiencing the revival of industry common throughout Soviet Russia. In 1921, the many factories, now humming busily, were closed and dead. The city, which, in 1917, numbered 2,000,000 inhabitants, had been reduced to 800,000 principally because the workers, confronted with industrial paralysis, had fled into the country to escape the famine. Now the city is rapidly recovering. Its numbers approximately 1,450,000 people and is steadily increasing. The Nevsky Prospect was alive with activity; whereas in 1921 it was a bare streak of desolation, all the shops being closed and the walls a-tatter with the remnants of proclamations posted up during the previous year of revolutionary struggle.

We were met at the depot by Ugaroff, secretary of the Leningrad Trades Council, and a body of other trade union leaders. We were whisked by auto to the Hotel Europe. This is the biggest hotel in Leningrad. It is patronized principally by diplomats, miscellaneous foreigners and local N. E. P. men. These elements are given the privilege of paying very freely for what they get. The profits of the hotel go to repair and build homes for the workers in Leningrad. The general manager was formerly a machinist.

Smolny

We had only three days to spend in Leningrad so had to utilize our time. Our guide, Hourwich, was a wonder at his trade, and a dramatically revolutionary figure such as one can find only in Soviet Russia. He had been a soldier in the struggle against Yudenitch, an agitator, a president of a trust, a representative of the Actors' Union, etc. He was literally saturated

with the history of the revolution and he knew Leningrad and all its institutions like a book. Before going to the factories, we decided to visit those three famous revolutionary centers, Smolny, the Winter Palace, and the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The Smolny Institute was the headquarters of the workers' forces in the revolutionary struggle against Kerensky. It was there they arrived at the historic decision to seize power from the Kerensky government. While we were visiting the place a meeting of peasant delegates was in progress in the very hall where this decision was made, and they insisted upon our speaking to them. Formerly Smolny was a seminary for daughters of the nobility. Now it is the headquarters of the Leningrad Communist Party. Many of those whom we encountered praised the accuracy of John Reed's book, "Ten Days That Shook the World," which portrays the stirring events that centered around this birthplace of the revolution.

An interesting feature of this historic building is the room in which Lenin lived and worked in the early revolutionary days. It was a very plain room in a building filled with luxurious quarters. Every square foot of the high walls was covered with wreaths of red flowers sent by workers' organizations from all over Russia in honor of the great leader, Lenin.

Another interesting place in Smolny, was the "House of the Peasants." This is a network of living rooms and offices. Here the peasants come from all the surrounding country to present their grievances and proposals regarding taxes, land divisions, etc. In the last two years 37,000 peasants passed through this "house," of whom 8,000 used the hotel accommodations, which cost only 5 cents per day per person. It is only one of the many vital centers of contact with the peasants that the Russian workers have established.

The Winter Palace

This great palace, home of the Czars since Peter the Great, was built in 1735. It was burned in 1837 and later rebuilt. It is located on the banks of the Neva. It was in the vast courtyard of this palace that took place the slaughter of Bloody Sunday in 1905, when the priest, Gapon, led thousands of workers to the palace to ask the Czar for redress of their grievances. It was also

the scene of the orgies of the decadent Russian royalty. It is fitted out in ostentatious splendor, but it lacks the oriental gorgeousness and barbaric garishness of the Moscow palaces. Now the whole palace is a museum.

One large section is a museum of revolutionary history. This contains pictures, documents, and relics of all the struggles against autocracy, from the uprising of the Decembrists a century ago, to the overthrow of the Kerensky government in 1917. There is a "life-size" reproduction of a cell in the Schlüsselberg fortress, with seven wax figures of prisoners. The cell is constructed of material taken from the old fortress. There are numberless pictures of strikes, executions, terrorist acts, of prison scenes, underground party life, of workers' leaders, of revolutionary struggles, etc. A visit through this section of the museum is an education in the long and bitter struggle of the Russian workers for emancipation.

The luxurious living rooms of the palace remain just as they were before the revolution. They are a vast treasure house of rich objects of art. Even in the heat of the revolutionary struggle little was stolen; a close check-up is possible because of the existence of books, apparently designed to prevent thievery by the former servants, which contain detailed diagrams of each room and exact descriptions and locations of every object in them. Only a few pictures, of particularly hated members of royalty, showed any mutilation. Everything else was intact. The clock and calendar in the room of Alexander II indicated the exact minute when he was killed, 3:34 p. m., March 31st, 1881. It was in the spacious and rich apartments of Nicholas III that Kerensky maintained the headquarters of his government.

The St. Peter and St. Paul Fortress

This infamous prison, often called "the cradle of the revolution" because so many of the workers' leaders were confined there, sprawls on the banks of the Neva opposite the Winter Palace. Its tall, needle-like spire is the highest built point in Soviet Russia. The fortress was constructed by Peter the Great in 1703. The first political prisoner to be kept there was the son of Peter the Great, whom the latter wanted to get rid of. For more than 200 years thereafter the fortress was used to confine political prisoners. At this place were executed the Decembrists

rebels 100 years ago. The prison was used especially to incarcerate the revolutionary youth. It has been described as a great spider which lived on the blood of the best youth of Russia. We visited the cells of Kropotkin, Gorky, Trotsky, and many others who had been active in the struggle upward of the Russian working class.

The St. Peter and St. Paul fortress was an especially horrible prison. All the prisoners were kept in solitary confinement. To prevent them from communicating with each other, the engineers made the walls of solid stone three feet thick. But this was in vain. Even the slightest tapping of one's finger nail on the wall is audible in the next cell. The prisoners talked with each other through a sort of Morse code, in spite of the harshest punishments for so doing. This was their only relief. The place was tomb-like in its silence. Even the corridors, where the guards walked, were heavily carpeted to kill all sound. The prisoners could hear no noise from outside, except the distant tolling of a bell every hour, which was a special torture for them. With nothing to do, many prisoners went mad. A horror was "the Judas," a peep-hole in the door through which the guards spied upon the prisoners. Many prisoners rotted from scurvy for lack of fresh food. The dark cell was a terrible place. Completely bereft of light, almost without air, and freezing cold in winter, prisoners were kept in this horrible dungeon for many days for the slightest real or imagined infraction of prison rules. In consequence many died of pneumonia and tuberculosis. On a stairway to an upper block of cells is still to be seen a heavy wire screen placed there to keep the desperate prisoners from killing themselves by jumping to the floor below. This terrible prison is a fitting memorial of the monster, Peter the Great. After the February, 1917, revolution, the Czar's ministers got a taste of their own medicine by being confined in this prison for a short time.

Besides being a notorious torture place for Russia's noblest young men and women, the St. Peter and St. Paul fortress was also the burying ground of the later Czars. It is a sort of Russian Westminster Abbey. In a church within the fort lies Peter and a score or two of his parasitic succeeding Czars and their relatives. In these modern days there is a big mint in the fortress, making Soviet money and employing 3,000 workers. In the

prison yard stands a small boat, supposedly built by Peter the Great and called the grandfather of the Russian fleet.

A word at this point about Russian prisoners and prisons may not be amiss. During the Czaristic regime many thousands of the militants and leaders of the workers were jailed or exiled. What is left of these have formed themselves into an association which is greatly honored. The old veteran prisoners are pensioned by the government. Many live in a beautiful home in Moscow. This was formerly used for superannuated Czarist officers. We paid it a visit. That night there was a concert, with leading artists from the principal theaters entertaining the revolutionary veterans. In this institute there are Communists, Anarchists, Mensheviks, etc. No distinction is made because of differences of political opinion. The only requirement for the aged applicant is that he has fought against the Czar and did time in jail for it.

Such horrible places as the old St. Peter and St. Paul and Schlüsselberg fortresses have been turned into museums. But unfortunately the workers have not yet been able to abolish prisons altogether. This is because there still remain elements in Soviet Russia who commit ordinary crime, or who are determined to overthrow the Workers' Government by force of arms. Many sentimentalists try to make capital against Soviet Russia because it still has a number of political prisoners, most of whom were arrested with arms in their hands. Especially the anarchists spread the ridiculous slander that present day Russian prisons are as bad or worse than under the Czar. All prisons are bad even under the very best of circumstances. But the regime in Soviet prisons is milder and more humane than in any other country. Just a little incident to illustrate it: When Peter Kropotkin, the noted anarchist, died a few years ago, the anarchists proposed that he be given a state funeral as a fighter in the cause of Labor. This was agreed to and the demonstration was placed under their control. Then the government permitted the anarchists in the Moscow jails, most of whom had been arrested in open armed rebellion, to participate in the funeral proceedings upon their simple promise to return to prison afterward. The comedy feature of the situation was that when the anarchists went back to the jail they had the devil's own time to be admitted, the man in charge being under the wrong impression that they had been finally released. The anarchists complained that

it was a "hell of a government" which would not even let them go back to jail. So "terrible" is the Soviet prison system.

Two interesting visits took up our first evening in Leningrad. One was a trip to the palace where the Russian Duma used to hold its sittings. The great hall was packed with about 2,000 of the leading elements of the Leningrad workers. These were the very cream of the local working class, the men who had borne the brunt of the heroic struggles against Kerensky, Yudenitch, and the rest. They were assembled to hear a report by Manuilsky on the latest developments in the international labor movement. They gave us a roaring welcome. Our second visit was to the other extreme—a trip to see the ballet. In no country is the ballet so wonderful as in Soviet Russia. The Russians are intense lovers of dancing. The production in Leningrad vies with that in Moscow. The theater was packed with well-dressed people and, wondering as to the social make-up of the crowd, we inquired from the manager. He produced the figures of the day's ticket sales, which totalled 1,554, of which 648 went to the trade unions, 480 to the universities (the students are workers or children of workers), and 420 were sold to the general public at the box office. It was predominantly a proletarian crowd filling this theater which was once the special preserve of the aristocratic exploiters.

A Rubber Factory

In Leningrad the first factory we visited was the gigantic Red Triangle Rubber Works. This plant employs 16,598 workers, of whom 8,759 are women. It is one of six factories comprising the rubber trust, which all told employs 35,000 workers. It is so large that if its buildings were placed end to end on a one-floor basis they would stretch 30 miles. Before the war the plant was owned by American, British, and French capitalists, and was known as the American Rubber Works.

The plant carries on a general rubber manufacturing business, producing tires, rubbers, gloves, belting, toys, combs, medical goods, etc. It produces 70,000 pairs of rubbers daily. It is undergoing the same growth in all directions common now to Soviet industry. The following tables indicate the increase in output, number of workers, amount of wages, and value of production per worker.

Output (pre-war roubles)

1913	64,061,077
1923	27,393,315
1924	25,919,622
1925	63,344,858

Number of Workers

1913	11,634
Jan. 1, 1923	9,401
" " 1924	7,991
" " 1925	9,684
" " 1926	16,598

Average Monthly Earnings of Workers

(Present Wages Equivalent to About 115% of pre-war.)

1913	33 roubles, 50 kopeks
1923	54 roubles, 46 kopeks
1924	79 roubles, 43 kopeks
1925	82 roubles, 80 kopeks

Value of Daily Output per Worker (pre-war roubles)

1913	22 roubles
Oct. 1923	18 roubles, 94 kopeks
Oct. 1924	27 roubles, 27 kopeks
Oct. 1925	28 roubles, 42 kopeks

The plant is being rapidly extended. During the past year 1,300,000 roubles have been expended on improvements, including a big electric power plant costing 600,000 roubles, a new American dryer process for rubbers, a new belting department, new methods of making cord tires, etc. Plans are also being executed to have finished by next year a big rubber plant at Yaroslav, which will employ 15,000 workers. In this plant the workers at the bench and in the leading positions were overflowing with optimism as to future prospects.

Before the revolution the workers in these and other Russian plants had no organizations whatever. Now they have a whole network of associations to look after their cultural and material needs. First, let us look at the trade union. Almost 100% of the workers in the plant are members of the Chem-

Workers' Union. The central committee of the national union makes the general agreements with the trust, covering its various plants. The factory committees work out their details and local applications.

These factory committees are rooted deeply into the masses of workers who take an active part in the life of the industry. In this plant the factory committee consists of 27 members, elected for a six months' period at a general mass conference of delegates, on the basis of one delegate to each five workers. Seven of this committee are paid employees of the union. There is a general meeting of delegates semi-monthly, on the basis of one delegate to each 15 workers, to supervise the work of the factory committee. There are also organized sections and section membership meetings for each craft. In addition, the workers have dues collectors, each of whom is assigned about 30 workers. The total number of all functionaries, committee members, dues collectors, etc., or "the active," as they are called in Soviet Russia, is 3,000. Occasional meetings of "the active" are held.

The factory committee has three general sub-committees: (a) cultural, (b) protection of labor, (c) production. The cultural committee supervises the elaborate set of educational and recreational institutions centering in and around the factory clubs, schools, etc. The protection of labor committee attends to the grievances of the workers and deals with the enforcement of the union agreement with the administration. The production committee cooperates with the administration in the improvement of the technical side of the industry.

In Soviet Russia the direct administration of the factories is under control of the Supreme Economic Council, an organ of the Soviet Government. But the trade unions nevertheless have an active part in the management of the industry. They have representatives in all the regulating and planning bodies, and regularly receive reports from the state industrial organs. The factory committees keep closely in touch with the books and general business of their respective factories, the factory management submitting regular reports to them. They organize production conferences between the workers and the management, at which proposals for improving production methods and practices are made. The Red Triangle Rubber Factory is organized according to this system.

This plant serves also to illustrate the form of organization of the Communist Party, which is based upon factory units. There are 2,500 members of the Party and 4,000 members of the Communist Youth organization. Both are organized upon the same plan. Each craft has its own Communist nuclei, of which there are 34 in the plant. The executives of these nuclei form a joint committee. Then there is a general executive committee elected by a mass meeting of the membership, which controls all the Party activities in the plant.

Besides the Party and the trade union, there are many other workers' organizations in the factory, including the Red Aid (for relief of working class political prisoners) with 11,000 members, cooperatives (14,500 members) sports societies, workers' correspondents of the Party and trade union press, organizations for mutual aid, to combat illiteracy and religion, to develop Soviet Russia's air fleet, etc., etc. The workers publish six factory newspapers. They also have a bewildering array of clubs, rest houses, sanitariums, singing and dramatic societies, physical culture groups, orchestras, educational institutions. The Red Triangle Rubber Works is an excellent example of the triumphant revolution; there one can see clearly the great two-phased process of progress, the building of the industry and the raising of the workers' standards of life and labor.

A Textile Mill

In Soviet Russia the textile industry is booming. Wages and production are far in excess of pre-war rates. During the winter we had visited an interesting textile plant in Moscow, employing 3,000 workers and making woolen yarn. It was formerly owned by one Alexieff, who now, apparently reconciled to the loss of his plant, is an actor in the Moscow Art Theater. The mill is now present under the administration of Deutsch, formerly a worker in Detroit and, during the heated period of the revolution, the head of the Cheka in Odessa. We wanted also to get a glimpse of the important Leningrad textile industry, so we visited the textile factory named "The Red Flag."

The Red Flag mill, owned formerly by Russian capitalists, was established 55 years ago. It is equipped throughout with German machinery. It manufactures knit goods and employs 3,000

workers, of whom 75% are women. When we visited it the plant was working full blast. Production was at 116% of pre-war rate, and wages 110%. The plant cannot supply the ravenous market demand. Of its product, 80% is handled through the Textile Syndicate, 10% by the cooperatives, and 10% by private traders. The mill is fairly bursting itself with new growth. A big electrical power plant is being built. The Supreme Economic Council has set aside 12,000,000 roubles to carry through other elaborate extensions by 1929, which will triple or quadruple the mill's capacity.

The flourishing condition of this plant is typical of the whole Leningrad textile industry. Before the war there were 40,000 textile workers in Leningrad. Now there are 54,000. At one time during the civil war crisis only one plant was working. The Leningrad textile workers have several big clubs. We visited one with 6,000 members. It is an enormous affair, housed in a former palace of some kind. The well-fitted gymnasium is fully 60 yards square, the billiard room has 12 tables. In the auditorium, seating about 3,000, an interesting trial was in progress. A number of textile workers had been arrested for hooliganism. In order to impress upon them and their fellow workers the wrongness of such conduct, the Soviet Court tried the cases in the Workers' Club-house in the presence of the prisoners' worker friends. This is a common procedure. Its moral effect is great. Such worker prisoners are usually let off lightly, being commonly sentenced to carry out certain courses of reading or to engage in specified useful activities among the workers.

In all Russian industries the workers are militant and assertive. They don't fail to make the visitor realize that the revolution is a reality and that they are running the plants. But in the Red Flag textile mill they simply overflowed with revolutionary spirit. As we went through the various departments they gave us demonstrative greetings, and as we sat in the offices gathering statistics on the industry they elected from among themselves a committee who told us of the 12-hour day, the low wages, and the general tyranny that existed in their plant before the revolution, and who pledged their solidarity with American workers. In return we explained to them the deep crisis in the American textile industry and the heroic struggles of the workers in Passaic

and other northern textile centers against falling standards of living. As we finally left the plant scores of workers accompanied us to the street, while hundreds of others lined up at the windows to wave us good-bye. We shall not soon forget the wonderful spirit of the textile workers in The Red Flag mill.

A Ship-Building Plant

An important and instructive industry which we visited in Leningrad is the Baltic Ship-Building Plant. This ship-yard, employing 5,349 workers, and covering 70 acres, was built in 1850 and served up to the time of the revolution as a government navy yard. Now it is used chiefly for the building and repairing of merchant ships. It is a very complete plant, manufacturing all parts of a ship except radio apparatus, and it is now being equipped to make that. The plant was working on a fleet of eight 5,000-ton steamers, of which four were almost completed, to engage in the lumber trade between Soviet Russia and Great Britain. These ships have a number of interesting features. First, their names. They are called the "Stalin," "Zinoviev," "Krassin," "Tomsky," "Worker," "Peasant," "Pravda," and "Iskra." Then there are the unique accommodations for the crews: The Seamen's Union proposed, and it was accepted, that instead of the crews all being jammed together forward, they should be housed amidships, two in a room, in quarters equipped with adequate bath rooms. The ship-yard was about to begin on two big passenger ships. Average wages of the workers were at about 90% pre-war rates.

Together with the famous Putiloff works and other metal factories, the Baltic Plant has played a vital part in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, it having long been a militant center. An unusually large percentage of the workers are Communists, 1154 belonging to the Party and also 1154 to the Communist Youth Organization. Half of the National Executive Committee of the latter body works in the plant, which has produced many scores of leaders who have been scattered all over the Soviet Union in charge of factories and other institutions. The Party work is highly developed. Even the "October children" (8 to 12 years old) and the Pioneers (12 to 15 years), 350 of them have their own club and varied organized activities. Over 8,000

workers are members of the complex organizations in and around the plant. In one week just before our visit 2,000 joined a new society organized for the protection of the war orphans.

An interesting feature of this plant was the women workers. About 300 are employed, half of whom work in the offices. The best work in the shops. The policy of the Party and the Metal Workers' Union is to bring the women into the skilled trades, as part of the general movement for woman's emancipation. This is being done. About 40 of the women are skilled mechanics, and 18 are studying mechanical engineering in the excellent plant technical school. All the operators of the electric cranes are women. The plant engineers insisted that they are a complete success at this work, which is carried on in shops roaring with automatic riveting hammers. They are steadier than the men, turn out more work, and have fewer accidents. The women workers elect special delegates to the various sub-committees of the factory committee. The housewives also are organized. The women workers furnish their wives' names to the Party, which organizes the women into housewives' unions, clubs, etc., which are then connected together by a delegate system on a city-wide scale. The leader of the woman's work in this plant was a militant Esthonian girl. She had been arrested in the Esthonian uprising of two years ago, and later exchanged by the Esthonian government for one of its officers held prisoner in Soviet Russia.

The Baltic plant provides an excellent example of the "Smitschka," one of the many new and interesting institutions developed in Soviet Russia to solidly unite the producing masses. By the Smitschka the workers in the Soviet factories are connected up with either Red Army units or peasant groups, or both, and they utilize these connections to impregnate these groups with proletarian knowledge and spirit. For example, the Communist International is the "chef," or patron, of the Red Army Electro-Technical Engineers' Battalion in Moscow. The latter have a Smitschka with the workers in the nearby big printing establishment. The workers and soldiers in the two units fraternize with each other, giving entertainments for one another, engaging in joint educational work, etc. Thus the new proletarian organizations are locked together at the bottom among the masses, as well as at the top through the government organs.

The Baltic Ship-Yard workers have a Smitschka with a group of peasant villages 350 miles away. The plant association is voluntary; 3,000 of the workers belong to it and pay dues. With their funds the workers are establishing libraries in the villages, sending the peasants agricultural machinery, and helping them drain their swamps. In the principal village center they are building a modern agricultural school and a peoples' house, or peasants' club, modeled after the workers' clubs. Upon the recent anniversary of Lenin's death the Baltic Ship-Yard workers worked and donated the day's pay to help finance their Smitschka. They say, "During the famine we were compelled to take wheat from the peasants; now we are paying for it." All Russian industries of any considerable size have such Smitschkas.

Rest Houses

Throughout Soviet Russia the palatial homes of the former exploiting class are being used variously as workers' clubs, hospitals, etc., and otherwise for the workers' convenience. There are a great many utilized as rest houses, which are places to recuperate workers who are run down and need a rest. We visited a colony of these rest houses in Leningrad. It is located on an island in the Neva, called Stony Island, only a short way from town. We plugged through three feet of snow to get there. Formerly the place was an ultra-aristocratic suburb. Now 18 of the mansions are used as rest houses. They accommodate 1800 workers. There are 40 such rest houses in the Leningrad workers. They are maintained by the trade unions. The workers are sent there for vacations of two weeks or more, free of charge. This year 45,000 workers will be entertained in the Leningrad rest houses.

We visited the biggest mansion of the lot, the former home of ex-senator Polatseff. In his time it accommodated only himself and a couple more of his family, with a score or two of servants to wait on them. When we saw it 207 workers were enjoying themselves in its enormous and luxurious suites of rooms. For the colony there is a central library with 12,000 books. There is also a club for the visitors to the rest homes, located in an exquisitely beautiful mansion, formerly owned by a wealthy engineer. There is the usual network of organizations for education and enjoyment. If the old-time aristocrats could see the use

that the workers are making of their rich former homes they would have a paralytic stroke.

A Port Bureau

An interesting feature of Leningrad is the so-called Port Bureau, the institution set up by the union for work among seamen entering the port. The big building housing the Bureau is well equipped to educate, entertain and organize visiting seamen. The place has a splendid library, with books and papers in a dozen languages. Lectures are held regularly in various tongues on Party, trade union, and general scientific subjects. Excellent theatrical performances are given, together with dances, concerts, and various sports. Many conveniences are provided for the seamen, including a dining hall, a post office, and a money exchange. Excursions are organized to take the visiting seamen to the theatres, museums, factories, rest houses, etc. The Bureau has a Smitschka with various workers' clubs, which invite the seamen to attend all their social and educational affairs.

Of all the sailors who come to Leningrad, 95% patronize the Port Bureau. This institution actively organizes the unorganized. Nearly every ship that leaves Leningrad is 100% unionized. Often representatives of the Bureau settle the men's grievances with the ship's officers. The Bureau collects dues for various seamen's unions of other countries, and has a direct mandate from several of them to look after the interests of their members who happen to be in Leningrad. During various seamen's strikes, centering in other countries, the Port Bureau has proved to be a power in preventing scab crews from leaving Leningrad. The Port Bureau form of organization is spreading, as an effective means to do work among the migratory sailors. There are such bureaus in the several leading Russian seaports, and also in Hamburg, Rotterdam and Bordeaux. When will similar ones be established in American ports?

A Communist University

Throughout Soviet Russia a tremendous work of education is going on in the various types of schools, in the factories, clubs, etc. We visited many of such institutions, including the big Stalin and Sverdlov universities in Moscow. These are totally different

institutions from the universities in the United States. The students are all Communists, and the courses of study are designed to develop them into militant proletarian revolutionary leaders, not into strike-breakers and Fascists, as is the case in American universities. A glimpse at the university for the Western Peoples, which we visited in Leningrad, will indicate their general type.

This university is under the general direction of Laukki, formerly a member of the I. W. W. in the United States. (Think of it, an I. W. W. a president of a university. And why not?) There are 300 students, mostly from Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. The bulk of them are veterans of the revolutionary struggles in these former Russian provinces. A few hail from the United States. The object of the university is to develop them into effective Communist leaders. The course of study lasts three years, with an additional year of preparatory work. It constitutes an elaborate political education in economics, labor history, the natural sciences, and Marxian and Leninistic social analysis and working class strategy and organization. Various languages are also taught. The worker who goes through this course emerges well equipped to be a leader of the working class. The Dalton system of teaching is used. Great emphasis is laid on the teaching of statistics and general social movements by graphic charts. The university possesses extensive laboratories for the study of evolution and the biological sciences. Of the students, 80% are workers. Women make up 20% of the total. The university is directly under the control of the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

The Labor Temple and the Unions

In all Russian cities the Labor Temple is called the "Dvorets Truda," or Palace of Labor. This is no misnomer, because the unions are always housed in palatial structures. The Leningrad unions are no exception. They have their headquarters on the Boulevard of the Trade Unions, in a vast building, originally the palace of a Grand Duke, and later an institute for the daughters of the nobility. It was presented to the union by the government in 1917, in the name of the October revolution.

The Palace of Labor has many spacious and beautiful meeting halls. There is also a splendid museum containing elaborate

statistical records and photographs of the local congresses, revolutionary struggles, etc. One interesting exhibit showed the evolution of the workers' diet, in fac simile, from the starvation rations of 1919-21 to the plentiful food of today; another portrayed the progressive betterment that is taking place in the workers' clothes and homes; another was a collection of all the standard types of working clothes now in use in Soviet Russia; another the evolution of the dues books and stamps of Russian unions, etc. An art gallery contained many fine specimens of proletarian paintings. One picture that caused merriment was a splendidly done comic portrayal of the Leningrad Labor Council in session, in which all the leading delegates were caricatured. There is also a club for the delegates to the Council. The leaders who accompanied us stated that the unions have their own yacht club. It possesses 50 yachts, one of which was that of the former Czar. Before the revolution it was one of the most aristocratic clubs in the city. Now it is open to all the workers.

The Leningrad Central Labor Council is made up of 150 delegates, representing the 22 national industrial unions which have members in the city. The representation is based upon the factory committees and the district sections of these committees. The Council meets monthly. It has a presidium, or executive committee, of 15 regular and 7 alternate members, which meets weekly. This committee is elected yearly at a general convention of the representatives of the factory committees. There are no local unions based on territory or craft, such as make up the A. F. of L. and its constituent bodies. The Leningrad Labor Council is a powerful organization, entering directly into all the economic questions affecting the lives of the workers.

The average monthly wage of all workers in Leningrad was 61 roubles on Oct. 1, 1924, and 64 roubles on Oct. 1, 1925. This is somewhat above the pre-war average. In the Leningrad District the productivity of labor has risen to such a degree that the value of all produced commodities increased 95% from Oct. 1, 1924, until Oct. 1, 1925. The membership of the 22 industrial unions total 620,880, or almost 50% of the entire population of the city. Of the union membership, 417,283 are men and 203,597 women. The women are the majority in the Textile (60%), Clothing (57%), Teachers (54%), Sanitary Workers

(68%), and Communal Dining Room Workers (67%) Unions. The largest unions are the Metal Workers (105,794), Railway Workers (50,973), Office Workers (50,716), and Textile Workers (47,538). During the three months of October, November and December, 1925, the Leningrad unions spent 1,810,942 roubles for educational purposes, and 475,620 roubles for unemployment relief. The following table shows the fluctuations in the membership of the unions, the sinking of the total during the civil war crisis of 1919-1920 and the rise with the present growing prosperity:

Membership of Leningrad Trade Unions

1918	447,770
1919	297,717
1920	276,416
1921	349,308
1922	371,271
1923	348,396
1924	451,164
1925	489,946
1926	620,880

As we had finished our visit to Leningrad's factories and other workers' institutions and were about to leave for Moscow Ugaroff, the secretary of the Central Labor Council, said to us, "Well, we have shown you our unions and how they are carrying on their work in the factories. You come from a great industrial country where the unions are much older than ours. Now you tell us what your unions have to teach us in the way of labor organization. What have they that is better than ours? We will be only too glad to learn from them if we can."

We were utterly stumped. It was such an unexpected question. We cudgled our brains, trying to conjure up a single feature of the American unions that the Russian unions could profitably pattern after. But in vain. We could think of nothing, and we said so. In their structure, leadership, social conception, fighting spirit, control of industry, manner of conducting business—in every respect, the Russian unions are a thousand miles ahead of the American unions, cursed as the latter are with reactionary and faker leaders, antiquated craft structure, B. & O. Plan

class collaboration conceptions, etc. All they way back to Moscow, in fact all the way back to the United States, we pondered over Ugaroff's leading question. And our final conclusion is that our answer to him was absolutely correct. The American trade unions have nothing whatever to teach the Russian workers, except how not to build a labor movement; whereas the Russian workers have innumerable precious lessons for the American workers on the way to construct a real labor organization.

CHAPTER V

The Revolution Triumphant

Not more than four or five years ago the Russian revolution was still confronted with such terrific life and death problems that only those workers of real revolutionary understanding and courage could perceive the elements of victory in the incredibly difficult situation. But now, so great is the progress that has been made, the victory of the revolution is patent to all except those who refuse to see it. In Soviet Russia at the present time one is struck on every side by a thousand manifestations of the successfully growing new social order, by the enormous advances that are being made in the development of industry and in the welfare of the working masses; cultural, material, political. All these institutions we visited bore out this statement.

Since the end of the civil war in 1921 the central problem confronting the revolution has been the rehabilitation and development of industry and agriculture, ruined by seven years of war and deep-going revolution. The difficulties in the way of solving these vital problems were staggering. But these have either been completely overcome or are being rapidly surmounted. So much is this so that now the Soviet Union is just entering a period of rapid and far-reaching development of its industry and agriculture such as probably no other country has ever experienced. The new industrial machinery of the Soviet state is still creaking a bit, wearing off its newness and adapting itself to its unique problems. But it has already unmistakably demonstrated its stability to initiate and carry through the great Socialist economic development now going on in the Soviet Union.

Despite the ravages of war, blockade, famine, sabotage by technicians, and all the enormous problems of revolutionizing production from a capitalist to a Communist basis, the output of Russian industry had by Oct. 1st, 1925, already reached 71% of the pre-war rate. In his report to the convention of the Russian Communist Party five months ago, Stalin said that this year's program would increase industrial production to 95% of pre-war

Now Rykov says the 95% has been reached. But even this rapid increase does not satisfy the tremendous demand for commodities, which is one of the most outstanding features of the situation in Soviet Russia. Dzerjinsky, of the Supreme Economic Council, speaking before the Central Committee of the All-Russian Trade Unions, said:

"The last economic year, 1924-25, had a record increase of 64%, whilst the figures of increases for previous economic years are: 1921-22, 50%; 1922-23, 45%; 1923-24, 30%. Thus we have experienced a rate of increase which has never been known before in history, and that not only in the history of our own reconstruction but also of other nations since the war."

The State Planning Commission (Gosplan) provided for a general increase of 49% in industrial production during the present economic year of 1925-26, ending Oct. 1st. Owing, however, to an overestimation of the amount of grain available for export, this figure had to be cut 7%. But this is an insignificant check in the face of the tremendous surge forward now taking place in Russian industry. An important consideration is that the rapidly increasing production is definitely tending in the direction of socialized industry and away from privately owned industry. Although the N. E. P. still makes some progress in volume, relatively it is on the decline; because the state-owned industries and cooperatives are making much more rapid progress. Stalin, in the above mentioned report, stated that in the economic year of 1923-24 the production by state-owned industry and cooperatives was 70% of all industrial production, and private 31%, whereas in the year 1924-25 that of state-owned industry and the cooperatives had increased to 80%, and that of private concerns had decreased to 20%. The danger of the N. E. P. is a rapidly diminishing quantity in the face of the healthy new social order.

The great project for the electrification of Russia's industries and cities, which Lenin correctly held to be of vital importance in the development of the new Communist society, is also proceeding with unexpected rapidity. In 1921 the whole project seemed hardly more than a dream. Now it is almost half

completed. It will be finished by 1932. On Dec. 6, 1925, the immense Shatura power station near Moscow, the largest of its kind in the world, was opened. Many of the other 30 power plants projected in Leningrad, the Don Basin, the Urals, etc., are far on the way to completion. Russian engineers are now in the United States in connection with the immense project on the River Dneiper, which alone will cost \$75,000,000. The conclusion of this great national electrification project will give a vital impulse to the whole economic and political life of the Soviet Union.

Extensive plans are everywhere being put into operation for the development of industries. The improvements we saw on our tour of inspection are simply typical. During the period of civil war and acute revolutionary struggle, up till 1921, about all the workers could do was to preserve the existing industrial plants and to carry on a small minimum of production. From 1921 until the present time, the task has been to rehabilitate these plants and to bring them to the maximum production possible. This has been practically accomplished. The great task confronting the workers is to build new factories, to dig new mines, and to generally develop and extend the whole industrial system. They are going at this with unexampled vigor and enthusiasm. They realize that only with an industrialized country can they have real Communism. The transport, metal, fuel, electrical, and other key industries are being widely developed; the distributing system of co-operatives is growing with young and lusty strength. The flourishing Ekaterinoslav co-operatives are typical. The building of 26 new steel mills and metal works and the importation of 300,000,000 marks' worth of machinery from Germany, are only two items of the far-reaching plans of industrial development.

In building their industries, the revolutionary workers are demanding the most advanced industrial technique. They are taking as their model the American industries. In Russian factories and mills one hears from the directors and engineers little about the industrial methods of England, Germany, or France. It is all America, and especially Ford, whose plants are quite generally considered as the very symbol of advanced industrial technique. In view of the tremendous wave of industrialization now taking place in Soviet Russia it is safe to say that within a few years that country will be among the leading industrial countries of the world.

Agricultural production is also being increased. It has not reached 91% of the pre-war volume. The number of sheep, cattle and hogs now exceeds the pre-war figure. A fundamental necessity for the development of Russian economic life in all its phases, is to increase the productivity of agriculture, especially with regard to exportable grains. At present Soviet Russia produces an average crop of only 11 bushels of wheat per acre. With proper methods this output can be doubled, which, when accomplished, will not only lay the basis for a big domestic market, but also for an enormous export of food stuffs and import of machinery and other commodities necessary to build the Russian industries. To increase production the peasants must be educated to modern methods of farming, supplied with fertilizers, and provided with tractors for deep plowing. Great strides are being made in all these directions. An enormous educational work, technical as well as political, is going on among the peasants, and within the past two years 10,000 tractors have been imported. These tractors are only the straggling advance-guard of the gigantic army of them which will be brought into Russian agriculture within the next few years. The revolution in the technique of agriculture is proceeding apace. And the ever-more firmly cemented alliance between the workers in the cities and the poor and middle peasants on the land, makes certain that this developing revolution in farming methods will proceed in harmony with the interests of the proletarian revolution as a whole.

As the workers build and develop their industries, bending every effort to this end, they do not forget the main purpose of the revolution, which is to improve their own general social conditions. They are rapidly and systematically bettering the conditions of the working masses. Average wages in industry are constantly on the rise. On Oct. 1, 1924, wages amounted to 67% of pre-war rates, on Oct. 1, 1925, 82%, and on Dec. 1, 1925, 96%. In many industries wages already exceed pre-war rates, as textiles 121%, chemicals 120%, leather 121%, etc. In all the industries wages will soon be far above pre-war standards. The Soviet Union is the only country in the world where real wages are on the increase for the masses of the workers. In all other countries, not excepting the United States, they are on the decline.

The cultural level of the Russian workers is also being raised. The tremendous educational work being done by the Communist Party, the Soviet government, the trade unions, and other organizations, through the schools, clubs, theatres, cinemas, radio, etc., despite a thousand difficulties is one of the most striking features and greatest accomplishments of the revolution. Its extent and revolutionary significance, can hardly be imagined by one living in a capitalist country. The working masses of Soviet Russia are being educated; they are emerging from the long era of ignorance and superstition into the bright sunlight of proletarian culture.

Concurrently with the development of Soviet institutions generally, the working classes are being thoroughly organized politically, culturally, economically, and in many other ways. The Communist Party, head and brains of this whole vast revolutionary movement, has sunk its roots deep into the masses. On November 1, 1925, the Party had 1,025,000 members, of whom 57% were workers, 25% peasants, and 18% office employees. Of the working class as a whole, 8% are members of the Party, and of the workers in the heavy industries 25%. The Communist Youth organization on the same date had 1,633,000 members. The 20 trade unions, based on the industrial principle, comprise over 90% of all the workers, or 7,846,789 members, an increase of 2,024,111 in the past 18 months. Many millions of workers and peasants are united in the co-operatives, the Red Aid and various other organizations, making for the intellectual and physical welfare of the producing masses. All of these organizations are growing with great rapidity. The whole society is alive with growth and progress.

But the revolution is still confronted with many complicated and difficult problems. The central one is the ever-present problem of the workers, who comprise only about 15% of the total population, retaining control over the overwhelmingly agricultural country and directing the revolution into proletarian channels. The difficulties of this task are enormous and quite unique in history. The last two general discussions in the Russian Party with first Trotsky and then Zinoviev leading the opposition whirled around this problem of the relation of the workers to the peasants. Upon its correct solution depends the fate of the revolution.

And it is being correctly solved. The Communist Party, which has met and solved so many apparently insoluble problems, has definitely consolidated the working class as the leader of the great Russian masses. It keeps the reins of the revolution in the hands of the workers and wins the active co-operation of the poor and middle peasants in the building of the new society.

One of the greatest difficulties now confronting the Soviet Union is the "capital famine," if I may so call it. All the industries are fairly crying out for the capital necessary for their development. We experienced this everywhere on our trip. Soviet Russia is confronted with the problem, unique in our time, of being compelled itself to accumulate the capital necessary for the development of its industries. Other new and developing countries have been able to draw upon the old capitalist countries for necessary capital. When, for example, the United States was laying the basis of its great industrial system, it was a vast investment field for foreign capital. Many of its railroads and industries were built by English, German and French capital. But Soviet Russia, ravaged by civil war and just beginning an era of tremendous industrial development, despite its ravenous appetite for capital, cannot draw upon the great world sources of capital. It is thrown upon its own resources. It must gradually accumulate its own capital. This is a terrific handicap. It slows up the whole tempo of industrial development. Soviet Russia is suffering from a veritable "capital famine," the product of the opposition of the world capitalist class to the new social order.

This "capital blockade" against the Soviet Union is only the present dominant phase of the long struggle of the world's exploiters to destroy the Soviet government. The first phase of this struggle began immediately after the outbreak of the revolution, when the capitalist countries sent their armies to overthrow the workers' government. But this attack failed completely. The next phase in the great struggle was the organized attempt of the capitalist nations to blockade Soviet Russia politically and economically, and thus to isolate it from the rest of the world. But the Russian workers broke through this infamous blockade, which paralyzed the industries of the country and cost the lives of many thousands of people. Eventually they forced

all the capitalist countries of the world, except the ultra-reactionary United States, to officially recognize the Soviet government and to open the avenues of commerce to it. Now is taking place the struggle of the Soviet government against the "capital blockade," which is the present effort of the capitalist countries to kill Russian industries and thereby the revolution, by withholding from them the capital so vitally necessary to their development. But this counter-revolutionary strategem will fail also. The capitalist world knows no means and has no measures at its command which can block the advance of Soviet Russia, the spearhead of world revolution.

Revolutionary Russia is making headway in the difficult struggle to get capital for its industries. It is attacking the problem from all sides. The first victory in this general direction was the stabilization of the rouble. The financial experts declared this to be utterly impossible. Lenin, as usual, saw the tremendous importance of the task. He said: "If we succeed in stabilizing the rouble for a long period and subsequently forever, it means that we have won." The rouble has been definitely stabilized. One of the interesting exhibitions of the past winter in Moscow was the former Czar's jewels, which, worth 600,000,000 roubles, served as a treasury to support the rouble. Little did the Czar guess, in amassing these fabulous jewels, that one day they would perform such a useful service to humanity. The next task in strengthening the financial system was to balance the government budget, which the capitalist financial sharks throughout the world also pronounced impossible. But that, too, has been accomplished. The former abysmal deficits have been turned into substantial surpluses. Now is proceeding apace the task of the direct accumulation of capital for the building of industry. This is being accomplished in many ways; by increasing exports of food stuffs and imports of machinery (this year's exports will total 800,000,000 roubles as against 462,000,000 last year; and 700,000,000 imports, as against 600,000,000 last year) by the concentration of the financial resources of the country upon the building of the key and basic industries, by the raising of production in the industries to their maximum, etc., etc. Consequently the financial resources of the Soviet government are developing

leaps and bounds. In February, 1924, the total money in circulation was 312,000,000 roubles; in February, 1925, it had mounted to 1,250,000,000. In January, 1922, the resources of the State Bank were 53,000,000 roubles; in June, 1925, they had increased to 2,849,000,000. The program for this year calls for a surplus, or "profit," of 480,000,000 roubles in the state-owned industries, as against 40,000,000 last year, and 100,000,000 the year before. These few figures barely indicate the vast process of capital accumulation that is now going on and proceeding with ever-greater speed in Soviet Russia. The Russian workers are accumulating their own capital but we may rest assured that they will also find ways and means in the near future to draw heavily upon the vast supplies of capital in the capitalist countries. Beyond question they will succeed in liquidating the "capital famine" and breaking the "capital blockade."

Other difficult problems confront the revolution, but these are gradually being solved. A case in point is that of unemployment. Although the number of workers employed in Russian industries is rapidly increasing, an army of about 1,000,000 unemployed persists. This is due primarily to the flocking of peasants to the cities to get away from the overcrowding on the farms. The unemployed are mostly unskilled. There is a shortage of skilled workers. At present mass technical training of the unskilled unemployed is being carried on to enable their absorption into industry. But unemployment, although a vexing problem in Soviet Russia, is not a menace to the workers as it is in capitalist countries. It is not used as a club to beat down their living standards. Wages in Soviet Russia are not established by cut-throat competition among the workers. The representatives of the unions get together with the representatives of the government industries, who are controlled by the workers, and, after calculating the production of the industries and allowing for their future development, pay the workers as much in wages as the industries can stand. There are no exploiters to use the unemployed against the employed. Nor are the unemployed abandoned to starve as in capitalist countries. They are provided for. The elimination of the unemployment problem is one that will be progressively accomplished as Russian industry develops.

One clear and definite conclusion is forced home upon every

visitor to present-day Russia—the revolution is an unqualified success. Although the Russian workers still have many difficult questions to contend with they have broken the backbone of the great revolutionary problem. The worst is over. The past eight years of bitter, heart-breaking struggle are now bearing their fruits of victory. The revolutionary Russian toilers have vanquished every foe and solved innumerable problems altogether unique in human history. Their standards of life are rapidly rising. They are successfully constructing the new industrial system. They are pointing out the way that the workers everywhere must go in order to emancipate themselves from capitalist slavery.

Of revolutionary significance is the fact that the workers in western European countries are getting an inkling of the success of the Russian revolution. Confronted by a falling standard of living in their own countries, the offspring of a decaying capitalist system, and unable to improve matters by the old time reformist policies, they are beginning to realize that the Russian workers have found the true way to proletarian emancipation. Gradually the conviction is growing upon them that they, too, must take the same route. This is the meaning of the many delegations of workers within recent months, from England, Germany, Austria, and various other countries, that have visited the Soviet Union to study the revolution at first-hand. It also explains the alliance between the British and Russian trade unions which is shaking the Amsterdam International and promising a radical reorganization and unification of the international labor movement. It was a big factor in developing the British general strike, which was betrayed by the reformist leaders. The victorious Russian revolution, now more than ever, is becoming the inspiration, the teacher, and the leader of the world's working class.

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